THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

Public Information Department, 11150 East Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340

January 29, 1986

PRESS RELEASE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICHOLAS NIXON
Through March 23, 1986

Currently on view in The Cleveland Museum of Art's Gallery D is a group of twenty-three works by Nicholas Nixon (b. 1947), an American photographer who has received much critical acclaim in the past decade for a highly distinctive series of group portraits based on three themes: aging and kinship, poor people, and mortality. They may be seen through March 23.

Nicholas Nixon first made his reputation with cityscapes, and the Museum's show includes three of these panoramic, urban vistas. The majority of the images, however, are of people, beginning with a series of group portraits taken annually of his wife and her three sisters. In each photograph the young women pose in the same relative position, a device which highlights obvious as well as subtle changes in their physical appearances and their relationships to each other.

The second body comprises portraits of children and of working-class and very poor families. Each image reveals a compelling narrative, often through the subjects' responses to having their picture taken. The images provide telling glimpses of everyday life in which--no matter how harsh the physical conditions--humor, family cohesiveness, and human dignity endure.

The third series, of old people in a nursing home where Mr. Nixon has volunteered for the past three years, is the most gripping and unsettling. In these portraits of people very near death, he photographed at a close range and with deft control of light. Filled with compassion, the photographs depict their aged subjects without exploitation or voyeurism.

The photographs were selected by Tom Hinson, curator of contemporary art, and are shown courtesy of the Edwynn Houk Gallery, Chicago.

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